THE STORY OF FIFTY-SEVEN CENTS

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The Story of Fifty-Seven Cents

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The Story of the Sword
The Beginning at Old Lexington
The Story of Fifty-Seven Cents
His Power as a Preacher
Gift for Inspiring Others

By

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ACRES OF DIAMONDS

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The Story of the Sword

I

I

THE STORY OF THE SWORD[1]

I SHALL write of a remarkable man, an interesting man, a man of power, of initiative, of will, of persistence; a man who plans vastly and who realizes his plans; a man who not only does things himself, but who, even more important than that, is the constant inspiration of others. I shall write of Russell H. Conwell.

As a farmer's boy he was the leader of the boys of the rocky region that was his home; as a schoolteacher he won devotion; as a newspaper correspondent he gained fame; as a soldier in the Civil War he rose to important rank; as a lawyer he developed a large practice; as an author he wrote books that reached a mighty total of sales. He left the law for the ministry and is the active head of a great church that he raised from nothingness. He is the most popular lecturer in the world and yearly speaks to many thousands. He is, so to speak, the discoverer of "Acres of Diamonds," through which thousands of men and women have achieved success out of failure. He is the head

[1] *Dr. Conwell was living, and actively at work, when these pages were written. It is, therefore, a much truer picture of his personality than anything written in the past tense.*

of two hospitals, one of them founded by himself, that have cared for a host of patients, both the poor and the rich, irrespective of race or creed. He is the founder and head of a university that has already had tens of thousands of students. His home is in Philadelphia; but he is known in every corner of every state in the Union, and everywhere he has hosts of friends. All of his life he has helped and inspired others.

Quite by chance, and only yesterday, literally yesterday and by chance, and with no thought at the moment of Conwell although he had been much in my mind for some time past, I picked up a thin little book of description by William Dean Howells, and, turning the pages of a chapter on Lexington, old Lexington of the Revolution, written, so Howells had set down, in 1882, I noticed, after he had written of the town itself, and of the long-past fight there, and of the present-day aspect, that he mentioned the church life of the place and remarked on the striking advances made by the Baptists, who had lately, as he expressed it, been reconstituted out of very perishing fragments and made strong and flourishing, under the ministrations of a lay preacher, formerly a colonel in the Union army. And it was only a few days before I chanced upon this description that Dr. Conwell, the former colonel and former lay preacher, had told me of his experiences in that little old Revolutionary town.

Howells went on to say that, so he was told,

the colonel's success was principally due to his making the church attractive to young people. Howells says no more of him; apparently he did not go to hear him; and one wonders if he has ever associated that lay preacher of Lexington with the famous Russell H. Conwell of these recent years!

"Attractive to young people." Yes, one can recognize that to-day, just as it was recognized in Lexington. And it may be added that he at the same time attracts older people, too! In this, indeed, lies his power. He makes his church interesting, his sermons interesting, his lectures interesting. He is himself interesting! Because of his being interesting, he gains attention. The attention gained, he inspires.

Biography is more than dates. Dates, after all, are but mile-stones along the road of life. And the most important fact of Conwell's life is that he lived to be eighty-two, working sixteen hours every day for the good of his fellow-men. He was born on February 15, 1843—born of poor parents, in a low-roofed cottage in the eastern Berkshires, in Massachusetts.

"I was born in this room," he said to me, simply, as we sat together recently[1] in front of the old fireplace in the principal room of the little cottage; for he has bought back the rocky farm of his father, and has retained and restored the little old home. "I was born in this room. It

[1] *This interview took place at the old Conwell farm in the summer of 1915.*

was bedroom and kitchen. It was poverty." And his voice sank with a kind of grimness into silence.

Then he spoke a little of the struggles of those long-past years; and we went out on the porch, as the evening shadows fell, and looked out over the valley and stream and hills of his youth, and he told of his grandmother, and of a young Marylander who had come to the region on a visit; it was a tale of the impetuous love of those two, of rash marriage, of the interference of parents, of the fierce rivalry of another suitor, of an attack on the Marylander's life, of passionate hastiness, of unforgivable words, of separation, of lifelong sorrow. "Why does grandmother cry so often?" he remembers asking when he was a little boy. And he was told that it was for the husband of her youth.

We went back into the little house, and he showed me the room in which he first saw John Brown. "I came down early one morning, and saw a huge, hairy man sprawled upon the bed there—and I was frightened," he says.

But John Brown did not long frighten him! For he was much at their house after that, and was so friendly with Russell and his brother that there was no chance for awe; and it gives a curious sidelight on the character of the stern abolitionist that he actually, with infinite patience, taught the old horse of the Conwells to go home alone with the wagon after leaving the boys at school, a mile or more away, and at school-closing time to trot

gently off for them without a driver when merely faced in that direction and told to go! Conwell remembers how John Brown, in training it, used patiently to walk beside the horse, and control its going and its turnings, until it was quite ready to go and turn entirely by itself.

The Conwell house was a station on the Underground Railway, and Russell Conwell remembers, when a lad, seeing the escaping slaves that his father had driven across country and temporarily hidden. "Those were heroic days," he says, quietly. "And once in a while my father let me go with him. They were wonderful night drives—the cowering slaves, the darkness of the road, the caution and the silence and dread of it all." This underground route, he remembers, was from Philadelphia to New Haven, thence to Springfield, where Conwell's father would take his charge, and onward to Bellows Falls and Canada.

Conwell tells, too, of meeting Frederick Douglass, the colored orator, in that little cottage in the hills. "'I never saw my father,' Douglass said one day—his father was a white man—'and I remember little of my mother except that once she tried to keep an overseer from whipping me, and the lash cut across her own face, and her blood fell over me.'

"When John Brown was captured," Conwell went on, "my father tried to sell this place to get a little money to send to help his defense. But he couldn't sell it, and on the day of the execu-

tion we knelt solemnly here, from eleven to twelve, just praying, praying in silence for the passing soul of John Brown. And as we prayed we knew that others were also praying, for a church-bell tolled during that entire hour, and its awesome boom went sadly sounding over these hills."

Conwell believes that his real life dates from a happening of the time of the Civil War—a happening that still looms vivid and intense before him, and which undoubtedly did deepen and strengthen his strong and deep nature. Yet the real Conwell was always essentially the same. Neighborhood tradition still tells of his bravery as a boy and a youth, of his reckless coasting, his skill as a swimmer and his saving of lives, his strength and endurance, his plunging out into the darkness of a wild winter night to save a neighbor's cattle. His soldiers came home with tales of his devotion to them, and of how he shared his rations and his blankets and bravely risked his life; of how he crept off into a swamp, at imminent peril, to rescue one of his men lost or mired there. The present Conwell was always Conwell; in fact, he may be traced through his ancestry, too, for in him are the sturdy virtues, the bravery, the grim determination, the practicality, of his father; and romanticism, that comes from his grandmother; and the dreamy qualities of his mother, who, practical and hardworking New England woman that she was, was at the same time influenced by an almost startling mysticism.

And Conwell himself is a dreamer: first of all he is a dreamer; it is the most important fact in regard to him! It is because he is a dreamer and visualizes his dreams that he can plan the great things that to other men would seem impossibilities; and then his intensely practical side—his intense efficiency, his power, his skill, his patience, his fine earnestness, his mastery over others, develop his dreams into realities. He dreams dreams and sees visions—but his visions are never visionary and his dreams become facts.

The rocky hills which meant a dogged struggle for very existence, the fugitive slaves, John Brown—what a school for youth! And the literal school was a tiny one-room school-house where young Conwell came under the care of a teacher who realized the boy's unusual capabilities and was able to give him broad and unusual help. Then a wise country preacher also recognized the unusual, and urged the parents to give still more education, whereupon supreme effort was made and young Russell was sent to Wilbraham Academy. He likes to tell of his life there, and of the hardships, of which he makes light; and of the joy with which week-end pies and cakes were received from home!

He tells of how he went out on the roads selling books from house to house, and of how eagerly he devoured the contents of the sample books that he carried. "They were a foundation of learning

for me," he says, soberly. "And they gave me a broad idea of the world."

He went to Yale in 1860, but the outbreak of the war interfered with college, and he enlisted in 1861. But he was only eighteen, and his father objected, and he went back to Yale. But next year he again enlisted, and men of his Berkshire neighborhood, likewise enlisting, insisted that he be their captain; and Governor Andrews, appealed to, consented to commission the nineteen-year-old youth who was so evidently a natural leader; and the men gave freely of their scant money to get for him a sword, all gay and splendid with gilt, and upon the sword was the declaration in stately Latin that, "True friendship is eternal."

And with that sword is associated the most vivid, the most momentous experience of Russell Conwell's life.

That sword hangs at the head of Conwell's bed in his home in Philadelphia. Man of peace that he is, and minister of peace, that symbol of war has for over half a century been of infinite importance to him.

He told me the story as we stood together before that sword. And as he told the story, speaking with quiet repression, but seeing it all and living it all just as vividly as if it had occurred but yesterday, "That sword has meant so much to me," he murmured; and then he began the tale:

"A boy up there in the Berkshires, a neighbor's son, was John Ring; I call him a boy, for we all

called him a boy, and we looked upon him as a boy, for he was under-sized and under-developed—so much so that he could not enlist.

"But for some reason he was devoted to me, and he not only wanted to enlist, but he also wanted to be in the artillery company of which I was captain; and I could only take him along as my servant. I didn't want a servant, but it was the only way to take poor little Johnnie Ring.

"Johnnie was deeply religious, and would read the Bible every evening before turning in. In those days I was an atheist, or at least thought I was, and I used to laugh at Ring, and after a while he took to reading the Bible outside the tent on account of my laughing at him! But he did not stop reading it, and his faithfulness to me remained unchanged.

"The scabbard of the sword was too glittering for the regulations"—the ghost of a smile hovered on Conwell's lips—"and I could not wear it, and could only wear a plain one for service and keep this hanging in my tent on the tent-pole. John Ring used to handle it adoringly, and kept it polished to brilliancy.—It's dull enough these many years," he added, somberly. "To Ring it represented not only his captain, but the very glory and pomp of war.

"One day the Confederates suddenly stormed our position near New Berne and swept through the camp, driving our entire force before them; and all, including my company, retreated hurriedly

across the river, setting fire to a long wooden bridge as we went over. It soon blazed up furiously, making a barrier that the Confederates could not pass.

"But, unknown to everybody, and unnoticed, John Ring had dashed back to my tent. I think he was able to make his way back because he just looked like a mere boy; but however that was, he got past the Confederates into my tent and took down, from where it was hanging on the tent-pole, my bright, gold-scabbarded sword.

"John Ring seized the sword that had long been so precious to him. He dodged here and there, and actually managed to gain the bridge just as it was beginning to blaze. He started across. The flames were every moment getting fiercer, the smoke denser, and now and then, as he crawled and staggered on, he leaned for a few seconds far over the edge of the bridge in an effort to get air. Both sides saw him; both sides watched his terrible progress, even while firing was fiercely kept up from each side of the river. And then a Confederate officer — he was one of General Pickett's officers — ran to the water's edge and waved a white handkerchief and the firing ceased.

"'Tell that boy to come back here!' he cried. 'Tell him to come back here and we will let him go free!'

"He called this out just as Ring was about to enter upon the worst part of the bridge — the cov-

ered part, where there were top and bottom and sides of blazing wood. The roar of the flames was so close to Ring that he could not hear the calls from either side of the river, and he pushed desperately on and disappeared in the covered part.

"There was dead silence except for the crackling of the fire. Not a man cried out. All waited in hopeless expectancy. And then came a mighty yell from Northerner and Southerner alike, for Johnnie came crawling out of the end of the covered way—he had actually passed through that frightful place—and his clothes were ablaze, and he toppled over and fell into shallow water; and in a few moments he was dragged out, unconscious, and hurried to a hospital.

"He lingered for a day or so, still unconscious, and then came to himself and smiled a little as he found that the sword for which he had given his life had been left beside him. He took it in his arms. He hugged it to his breast. He gave a few words of final message for me. And that was all."

Conwell's voice had gone thrillingly low as he neared the end, for it was all so very, very vivid to him, and his eyes had grown tender and his lips more strong and firm. And he fell silent, thinking of that long-ago happening, and though he looked down upon the thronging traffic of Broad Street, it was clear that he did not see it, and that if the rumbling hubbub of sound meant anything to

him it was the rumbling of the guns of the distant past. When he spoke again it was with a still tenser tone of feeling.

"When I stood beside the body of John Ring and realized that he had died for love of me, I made a vow that has formed my life. I vowed that from that moment I would live not only my own life, but that I would also live the life of John Ring. And from that moment I have worked sixteen hours every day—eight for John Ring's work and eight hours for my own."

A curious note had come into his voice, as of one who had run the race and neared the goal, fought the good fight and neared the end.

"Every morning when I rise I look at this sword, or if I am away from home I think of the sword, and vow anew that another day shall see sixteen hours of work from me." And when one comes to know Russell Conwell one realizes that never did a man work more hard and constantly.

"It was through John Ring and his giving his life through devotion to me that I became a Christian," he went on. "This did not come about immediately, but it came before the war was over, and it came through faithful Johnnie Ring."

There is a little lonely cemetery in the Berkshires, a tiny burying-ground on a wind-swept hill, a few miles from Conwell's old home. In this isolated burying-ground bushes and vines and grass grow in profusion, and a few trees cast a

gentle shade; and tree-clad hills go billowing off for miles and miles in wild and lonely beauty. And in that lonely little graveyard I found the plain stone that marks the resting-place of John Ring.

The Beginning at Old Lexington

II

II

THE BEGINNING AT OLD LEXINGTON

IT is not because he is a minister that Russell Conwell is such a force in the world. He went into the ministry because he was sincerely and profoundly a Christian, and because he felt that as a minister he could do more good in the world than in any other capacity. But being a minister is but an incident, so to speak. The important thing is not that he is a minister, but that he is himself!

Recently I heard a New-Yorker, the head of a great corporation, say: "I believe that Russell Conwell is doing more good in the world than any man who has lived since Jesus Christ." And he said this in serious and unexaggerated earnest.

Yet Conwell did not get readily into his life-work. He might have seemed almost a failure until he was well on toward forty, for although he kept making successes they were not permanent successes, and he did not settle himself into a definite line. He restlessly went westward to make his home, and then restlessly returned to

the East. After the war was over he was a lawyer, he was a lecturer, he was an editor, he went around the world as a correspondent, he wrote books. He kept making money, and kept losing it; he lost it through fire, through investments, through aiding his friends. It is probable that the unsettledness of the years following the war was due to the unsettling effect of the war itself, which thus, in its influence, broke into his mature life after breaking into his years at Yale. But however that may be, those seething, changing, stirring years were years of vital importance to him, for in the myriad experiences of that time he was building the foundation of the Conwell that was to come. Abroad he met the notables of the earth. At home he made hosts of friends and loyal admirers.

It is worth while noting that as a lawyer he would never take a case, either civil or criminal, that he considered wrong. It was basic with him that he could not and would not fight on what he thought was the wrong side. Only when his client was right would he go ahead!

Yet he laughs, his quiet, infectious, characteristic laugh, as he tells of how once he was deceived, for he defended a man, charged with stealing a watch, who was so obviously innocent that he took the case in a blaze of indignation and had the young fellow proudly exonerated. The next day the wrongly accused one came to his office and shamefacedly took out the watch that he had been charged with stealing. "I want you to

send it to the man I took it from," he said. And he told with a sort of shamefaced pride of how he had got a good old deacon to give, in all sincerity, the evidence that exculpated him. "And, say, Mr. Conwell—I want to thank you for getting me off—and I hope you'll excuse my deceiving you—and—I won't be any worse for not going to jail." And Conwell likes to remember that thereafter the young man lived up to the pride of exoneration; and, though Conwell does not say it or think it, one knows that it was the Conwell influence that inspired to honesty—for always he is an inspirer.

Conwell even kept certain hours for consultation with those too poor to pay any fee; and at one time, while still an active lawyer, he was guardian for over sixty children! The man has always been a marvel, and always one is coming upon such romantic facts as these.

That is a curious thing about him—how much there is of romance in his life! Worshiped to the end by John Ring; left for dead all night at Kenesaw Mountain; calmly singing "Nearer, my God, to Thee," to quiet the passengers on a supposedly sinking ship; saving lives even when a boy; never disappointing a single audience of the thousands of audiences he has arranged to address during all his years of lecturing! He himself takes a little pride in this last point, and it is characteristic of him that he has actually forgotten that just once he did fail to appear: he has quite

forgotten that one evening, on his way to a lecture, he stopped a runaway horse to save two women's lives, and went in consequence to a hospital instead of to the platform! And it is typical of him to forget that sort of thing.

The emotional temperament of Conwell has always made him responsive to the great, the striking, the patriotic. He was deeply influenced by knowing John Brown, and his brief memories of Lincoln are intense, though he saw him but three times in all.

The first time he saw Lincoln was on the night when the future President delivered the address, which afterward became so famous, in Cooper Union, New York. The name of Lincoln was then scarcely known, and it was by mere chance that young Conwell happened to be in New York on that day. But being there, and learning that Abraham Lincoln from the West was going to make an address, he went to hear him.

He tells how uncouthly Lincoln was dressed, even with one trousers-leg higher than the other, and of how awkward he was, and of how poorly, at first, he spoke and with what apparent embarrassment. The chairman of the meeting got Lincoln a glass of water, and Conwell thought that it was from a personal desire to help him and keep him from breaking down. But he loves to tell how Lincoln became a changed man as he spoke; how he seemed to feel ashamed of his brief embarrassment and, pulling himself together and

putting aside the written speech which he had prepared, spoke freely and powerfully, with splendid conviction, as only a born orator speaks. To Conwell it was a tremendous experience.

The second time he saw Lincoln was when he went to Washington to plead for the life of one of his men who had been condemned to death for sleeping on post. He was still but a captain (his promotion to a colonelcy was still to come), a youth, and was awed by going into the presence of the man he worshiped. And his voice trembles a little, even now, as he tells of how pleasantly Lincoln looked up from his desk, and how cheerfully he asked his business with him, and of how absorbedly Lincoln then listened to his tale, although, so it appeared, he already knew of the main outline.

"It will be all right," said Lincoln, when Conwell finished. But Conwell was still frightened. He feared that in the multiplicity of public matters this mere matter of the life of a mountain boy, a private soldier, might be forgotten till too late. "It is almost the time set—" he faltered. And Conwell's voice almost breaks, man of emotion that he is, as he tells of how Lincoln said, with stern gravity: "Go and telegraph that soldier's mother that Abraham Lincoln never signed a warrant to shoot a boy under twenty, and never will." That was the one and only time that he spoke with Lincoln, and it remains an indelible impression.

The third time he saw Lincoln was when, as officer of the day, he stood for hours beside the dead body of the President as it lay in state in Washington. In those hours, as he stood rigidly as the throng went shuffling sorrowfully through, an immense impression came to Colonel Conwell of the work and worth of the man who there lay dead, and that impression has never departed.

John Brown, Abraham Lincoln, old Revolutionary Lexington—how Conwell's life is associated with famous men and places!—and it was actually at Lexington that he made the crucial decision as to the course of his life! And it seems to me that it was, although quite unconsciously, because of the very fact that it was Lexington that Conwell was influenced to decide and to act as he did. Had it been in some other kind of place, some merely ordinary place, some quite usual place, he might not have taken the important step. But it was Lexington, it was brave old Lexington, inspiring Lexington; and he was inspired by it, for the man who himself inspires nobly is always the one who is himself open to noble inspiration. Lexington inspired him.

"When I was a lawyer in Boston and almost thirty-seven years old," he told me, thinking slowly back into the years, "I was consulted by a woman who asked my advice in regard to disposing of a little church in Lexington whose congregation had become unable to support it. I went out and looked at the place, and I told her

how the property could be sold. But it seemed a pity to me that the little church should be given up. However, I advised a meeting of the church members, and I attended the meeting. I put the case to them—it was only a handful of men and women—and there was silence for a little. Then an old man rose and, in a quavering voice, said the matter was quite clear; that there evidently was nothing to do but to sell, and that he would agree with the others in the necessity; but as the church had been his church home from boyhood, so he quavered and quivered on, he begged that they would excuse him from actually taking part in disposing of it; and in a deep silence he went haltingly from the room.

"The men and the women looked at one another, still silent, sadly impressed, but not knowing what to do. And I said to them: 'Why not start over again, and go on with the church, after all!'"

Typical Conwellism, that! First, the impulse to help those who need helping, then the inspiration and leadership.

"'But the building is entirely too tumbledown to use,' said one of the men, sadly; and I knew he was right, for I had examined it; but I said:

"'Let us meet there to-morrow morning and get to work on that building ourselves and put it in shape for a service next Sunday.'

"It made them seem so pleased and encouraged, and so confident that a new possibility was

opening that I never doubted that each one of those present, and many friends besides, would be at the building in the morning. I was there early with a hammer and ax and crowbar that I had secured, ready to go to work—but no one else showed up!"

He has a rueful appreciation of the humor of it, as he pictured the scene; and one knows also that, in that little town of Lexington, where Americans had so bravely faced the impossible, Russell Conwell also braced himself to face the impossible. A pettier man would instantly have given up the entire matter when those who were most interested failed to respond, but one of the strongest features in Conwell's character is his ability to draw even doubters and weaklings into line, his ability to stir even those who have given up.

"I looked over that building," he goes on, whimsically, "and I saw that repair really seemed out of the question. Nothing but a new church would do! So I took the ax that I had brought with me and began chopping the place down. In a little while a man, not one of the church members, came along, and he watched me for a time and said, 'What are you going to do there?'

"And I instantly replied, 'Tear down this old building and build a new church here!'

"He looked at me. 'But the people won't do that,' he said.

"'Yes, they will,' I said, cheerfully, keeping at

my work. Whereupon he watched me a few minutes longer and said:

"'Well, you can put me down for one hundred dollars for the new building. Come up to my livery-stable and get it this evening.'

"'All right; I'll surely be there,' I replied.

"In a little while another man came along and stopped and looked, and he rather gibed at the idea of a new church, and when I told him of the livery-stable man contributing one hundred dollars, he said, 'But you haven't got the money yet!'

"'No,' I said; 'but I am going to get it to-night.'

"'You'll never get it,' he said. 'He's not that sort of a man. He's not even a church man!'

"But I just went quietly on with the work, without answering, and after quite a while he left; but he called back, as he went off, 'Well, if he does give you that hundred dollars, come to me and I'll give you another hundred.'"

Conwell smiles in genial reminiscence and without any apparent sense that he is telling of a great personal triumph, and goes on:

"Those two men both paid the money, and of course the church people themselves, who at first had not quite understood that I could be in earnest, joined in and helped, with work and money, and as, while the new church was building, it was peculiarly important to get and keep the congregation together, and as they had ceased to have a minister of their own, I used to run out from Boston and preach for them, in a room we hired.

"And it was there in Lexington, in 1879, that I determined to become a minister. I had a good law practice, but I determined to give it up. For many years I had felt more or less of a call to the ministry, and here at length was the definite time to begin.

"Week by week I preached there"—how strange, now, to think of William Dean Howells and the colonel-preacher!—"and after a while the church was completed, and in that very church, there in Lexington, I was ordained a minister."

A marvelous thing, all this, even without considering the marvelous heights that Conwell has since attained—a marvelous thing, an achievement of positive romance! That little church stood for American bravery and initiative and self-sacrifice and romanticism in a way that well befitted good old Lexington.

To leave a large and overflowing law practice and take up the ministry at a salary of six hundred dollars a year seemed to the relatives of Conwell's wife the extreme of foolishness, and they did not hesitate so to express themselves. Naturally enough, they did not have Conwell's vision. Yet he himself was fair enough to realize and to admit that there was a good deal of fairness in their objections; and so he said to the congregation that, although he was quite ready to come for the six hundred dollars a year, he expected them to double his salary as soon as he doubled the

church membership. This seemed to them a good deal like a joke, but they answered in perfect earnestness that they would be quite willing to do the doubling as soon as he did the doubling, and in less than a year the salary was doubled accordingly.

I asked him if he had found it hard to give up the lucrative law for a poor ministry, and his reply gave a delightful impression of his capacity for humorous insight into human nature, for he said, with a genial twinkle:

"Oh yes, it was a wrench; but there is a sort of romance of self-sacrifice, you know. I rather suppose the old-time martyrs rather enjoyed themselves in being martyrs!"

Conwell did not stay very long in Lexington. A struggling little church in Philadelphia heard of what he was doing, and so an old deacon went up to see and hear him, and an invitation was given; and as the Lexington church seemed to be prosperously on its feet, and the needs of the Philadelphia body keenly appealed to Conwell's imagination, a change was made, and at a salary of eight hundred dollars a year he went, in 1882, to the little struggling Philadelphia congregation, and of that congregation he is still pastor—only, it ceased to be a struggling congregation a great many years ago! And long ago it began paying him more thousands every year than at first it gave him hundreds.

Dreamer as Conwell always is in connection

with his immense practicality, and moved as he is by the spiritual influences of life, it is more than likely that not only did Philadelphia's need appeal, but also the fact that Philadelphia, as a city, meant much to him, for, coming North, wounded from a battle-field of the Civil War, it was in Philadelphia that he was cared for until his health and strength were recovered. Thus it came that Philadelphia had early become dear to him.

And here is an excellent example of how dreaming great dreams may go hand-in-hand with winning superb results. For that little struggling congregation now owns and occupies a great new church building that seats more people than any other Protestant church in America—and Dr. Conwell fills it!

The Story of the Fifty-Seven Cents

III

III

STORY OF THE FIFTY-SEVEN CENTS

AT every point in Conwell's life one sees that he wins through his wonderful personal influence on old and young. Every step forward, every triumph achieved, comes not alone from his own enthusiasm, but because of his putting that enthusiasm into others. And when I learned how it came about that the present church buildings were begun, it was another of those marvelous tales of fact that are stranger than any imagination could make them. And yet the tale was so simple and sweet and sad and unpretending.

When Dr. Conwell first assumed charge of the little congregation that led him to Philadelphia it was really a little church both in its numbers and in the size of the building that it occupied, but it quickly became so popular under his leadership that the church services and Sunday-school services were alike so crowded that there was no room for all who came, and always there were people turned from the doors.

One afternoon a little girl, who had eagerly

wished to go, turned back from the Sunday-school door, crying bitterly because they had told her that there was no more room. But a tall, black-haired man met her and noticed her tears and, stopping, asked why it was that she was crying, and she sobbingly replied that it was because they could not let her into the Sunday-school.

"I lifted her to my shoulder," says Dr. Conwell, in telling of this; for after hearing the story elsewhere I asked him to tell it to me himself, for it seemed almost too strange to be true. "I lifted her to my shoulder"—and one realizes the pretty scene it must have made for the little girl to go through the crowd of people, drying her tears and riding proudly on the shoulders of the kindly, tall, dark man! "I said to her that I would take her in, and I did so, and I said to her that we should some day have a room big enough for all who should come. And when she went home she told her parents—I only learned this afterward—that she was going to save money to help build the larger church and Sunday-school that Dr. Conwell wanted! Her parents pleasantly humored her in the idea and let her run errands and do little tasks to earn pennies, and she began dropping the pennies into her bank.

"She was a lovable little thing—but in only a few weeks after that she was taken suddenly ill and died; and at the funeral her father told me, quietly, of how his little girl had been saving money for a building-fund. And there, at the funeral,

he handed me what she had saved—just fifty-seven cents in pennies."

Dr. Conwell does not say how deeply he was moved; he is, after all, a man of very few words as to his own emotions. But a deep tenderness had crept into his voice.

"At a meeting of the church trustees I told of this gift of fifty-seven cents—the first gift toward the proposed building-fund of the new church that was some time to exist. For until then the matter had barely been spoken of, as a new church building had been simply a possibility for the future.

"The trustees seemed much impressed, and it turned out that they were far more impressed than I could possibly have hoped, for in a few days one of them came to me and said that he thought it would be an excellent idea to buy a lot on Broad Street—the very lot on which the building now stands." It was characteristic of Dr. Conwell that he did not point out, what every one who knows him would understand, that it was his own inspiration put into the trustees which resulted in this quick and definite move on the part of one of them. "I talked the matter over with the owner of the property, and told him of the beginning of the fund, the story of the little girl. The man was not one of our church, nor, in fact, was he a church-goer at all, but he listened attentively to the tale of the fifty-seven cents and simply said he was quite ready to go ahead and sell us that piece of land for ten thousand

dollars, taking—and the unexpectedness of this deeply touched me—taking a first payment of just fifty-seven cents and letting the entire balance stand on a five-per-cent. mortgage!

"And it seemed to me that it would be the right thing to accept this unexpectedly liberal proposition, and I went over the entire matter on that basis with the trustees and some of the other members, and all the people were soon talking of having a new church. But it was not done in that way, after all, for, fine though that way would have been, there was to be one still finer.

"Not long after my talk with the man who owned the land, and his surprisingly good-hearted proposition, an exchange was arranged for me one evening with a Mount Holly church, and my wife went with me. We came back late, and it was cold and wet and miserable, but as we approached our home we saw that it was all lighted from top to bottom, and it was clear that it was full of people. I said to my wife that they seemed to be having a better time than we had had, and we went in, curious to know what it was all about. And it turned out that our absence had been intentionally arranged, and that the church people had gathered at our home to meet us on our return. And I was utterly amazed, for the spokesman told me that the entire ten thousand dollars had been raised and that the land for the church that I wanted was free of debt. And all had come

so quickly and directly from that dear little girl's fifty-seven cents."

Doesn't it seem like a fairy tale! But then this man has all his life been making fairy tales into realities. He inspired the child. He inspired the trustees. He inspired the owner of the land. He inspired the people.

The building of the great church—the Temple Baptist Church, as it is termed—was a great undertaking for the congregation; even though it had been swiftly growing from the day of Dr. Conwell's taking charge of it, it was something far ahead of what, except in the eyes of an enthusiast, they could possibly complete and pay for and support. Nor was it an easy task.

Ground was broken for the building in 1889, in 1891 it was opened for worship, and then came years of raising money to clear it. But it was long ago placed completely out of debt, and with only a single large subscription—one of ten thousand dollars—for the church is not in a wealthy neighborhood, nor is the congregation made up of the great and rich.

The church is built of stone, and its interior is a great amphitheater. Special attention has been given to fresh air and light; there is nothing of the dim, religious light that goes with medieval churchliness. Behind the pulpit are tiers of seats for the great chorus choir. There is a large organ. The building is peculiarly adapted for hearing and seeing, and if it is not, strictly speaking,

beautiful in itself, it is beautiful when it is filled with encircling rows of men and women.

Man of feeling that he is, and one who appreciates the importance of symbols, Dr. Conwell had a heart of olive-wood built into the front of the pulpit, for the wood was from an olive-tree in the Garden of Gethsemane. And the amber-colored tiles in the inner walls of the church bear, under the glaze, the names of thousands of his people; for every one, young or old, who helped in the building, even to the giving of a single dollar, has his name inscribed there. For Dr. Conwell wished to show that it is not only the house of the Lord, but also, in a keenly personal sense, the house of those who built it.

The church has a possible seating capacity of 4,200, although only 3,135 chairs have been put in it, for it has been the desire not to crowd the space needlessly. There is also a great room for the Sunday-school, and extensive rooms for the young men's association, the young women's association, and for a kitchen, for executive offices, for meeting-places for church officers and boards and committees. It is a spacious and practical and complete church home, and the people feel at home there.

"You see again," said Dr. Conwell, musingly, "the advantage of aiming at big things. That building represents $109,000 above ground. It is free from debt. Had we built a small church, it would now be heavily mortgaged."

His Power as Orator and Preacher

IV

IV

HIS POWER AS ORATOR AND PREACHER

EVEN as a young man Conwell won local fame as an orator. At the outbreak of the Civil War he began making patriotic speeches that gained enlistments. After going to the front he was sent back home for a time, on furlough, to make more speeches to draw more recruits, for his speeches were so persuasive, so powerful, so full of homely and patriotic feeling, that the men who heard them thronged into the ranks. And as a preacher he uses persuasion, power, simple and homely eloquence, to draw men to the ranks of Christianity.

He is an orator born, and has developed this inborn power by the hardest of study and thought and practice. He is one of those rare men who always seize and hold the attention. When he speaks, men listen. It is quality, temperament, control—the word is immaterial, but the fact is very material indeed.

Some quarter of a century ago Conwell published a little book for students on the study and practice

of oratory. That "clear-cut articulation is the charm of eloquence" is one of his insisted-upon statements, and it well illustrates the lifelong practice of the man himself, for every word as he talks can be heard in every part of a large building, yet always he speaks without apparent effort. He avoids "elocution." His voice is soft-pitched and never breaks, even now when he is over seventy, because, so he explains it, he always speaks in his natural voice. There is never a straining after effect.

"A speaker must possess a large-hearted regard for the welfare of his audience," he writes, and here again we see Conwell explaining Conwellism. "Enthusiasm invites enthusiasm," is another of his points of importance; and one understands that it is by deliberate purpose, and not by chance, that he tries with such tremendous effort to put enthusiasm into his hearers with every sermon and every lecture that he delivers.

"It is easy to raise a laugh, but dangerous, for it is the greatest test of an orator's control of his audience to be able to land them again on the solid earth of sober thinking." I have known him at the very end of a sermon have a ripple of laughter sweep freely over the entire congregation, and then in a moment he has every individual under his control, listening soberly to his words.

He never fears to use humor, and it is always very simple and obvious and effective. With him even a very simple pun may be used, not only with-

out taking away from the strength of what he is saying, but with a vivid increase of impressiveness. And when he says something funny it is in such a delightful and confidential way, with such a genial, quiet, infectious humorousness, that his audience is captivated. And they never think that he is telling something funny of his own; it seems, such is the skill of the man, that he is just letting them know of something humorous that they are to enjoy with him.

"Be absolutely truthful and scrupulously clear," he writes; and with delightfully terse common sense, he says, "Use illustrations that illustrate"—and never did an orator live up to this injunction more than does Conwell himself. Nothing is more surprising, nothing is more interesting, than the way in which he makes use as illustrations of the impressions and incidents of his long and varied life, and, whatever it is, it has direct and instant bearing on the progress of his discourse. He will refer to something that he heard a child say in a train yesterday; in a few minutes he will speak of something that he saw or some one whom he met last month, or last year, or ten years ago—in Ohio, in California, in London, in Paris, in New York, in Bombay; and each memory, each illustration, is a hammer with which he drives home a truth.

The vast number of places he has visited and people he has met, the infinite variety of things his observant eyes have seen, give him his ceaseless

flow of illustrations, and his memory and his skill make admirable use of them. It is seldom that he uses an illustration from what he has read; everything is, characteristically, his own. Henry M. Stanley, who knew him well, referred to him as "that double-sighted Yankee," who could "see at a glance all there is and all there ever was."

And never was there a man who so supplements with personal reminiscence the place or the person that has figured in the illustration. When he illustrates with the story of the discovery of California gold at Sutter's he almost parenthetically remarks, "I delivered this lecture on that very spot a few years ago; that is, in the town that arose on that very spot." And when he illustrates by the story of the invention of the sewing-machine, he adds: "I suppose that if any of you were asked who was the inventor of the sewing-machine, you would say that it was Elias Howe. But that would be a mistake. I was with Elias Howe in the Civil War, and he often used to tell me how he had tried for fourteen years to invent the sewing-machine and that then his wife, feeling that something really had to be done, invented it in a couple of hours." Listening to him, you begin to feel in touch with everybody and everything, and in a friendly and intimate way.

Always, whether in the pulpit or on the platform, as in private conversation, there is an absolute

simplicity about the man and his words; a simplicity, an earnestness, a complete honesty. And when he sets down, in his book on oratory, "A man has no right to use words carelessly," he stands for that respect for word-craftsmanship that every successful speaker or writer must feel.

"Be intensely in earnest," he writes; and in writing this he sets down a prime principle not only of his oratory, but of his life.

A young minister told me that Dr. Conwell once said to him, with deep feeling, "Always remember, as you preach, that you are striving to save at least one soul with every sermon." And to one of his close friends Dr. Conwell said, in one of his self-revealing conversations:

"I feel, whenever I preach, that there is always one person in the congregation to whom, in all probability, I shall never preach again, and therefore I feel that I must exert my utmost power in that last chance." And in this, even if this were all, one sees why each of his sermons is so impressive, and why his energy never lags. Always, with him, is the feeling that he is in the world to do all the good he can possibly do; not a moment, not an opportunity, must be lost.

The moment he rises and steps to the front of his pulpit he has the attention of every one in the building, and this attention he closely holds till he is through. Yet it is never by a striking effort that attention is gained, except in so far that his utter simplicity is striking. "I want

to preach so simply that you will not think it preaching, but just that you are listening to a friend," I remember his saying, one Sunday morning, as he began his sermon; and then he went on just as simply as such homely, kindly, friendly words promised. And how effectively!

He believes that everything should be so put as to be understood by all, and this belief he applies not only to his preaching, but to the reading of the Bible, whose descriptions he not only visualizes to himself, but makes vividly clear to his hearers; and this often makes for fascination in result.

For example, he is reading the tenth chapter of I Samuel, and begins, "'Thou shalt meet a company of prophets.'"

"'Singers,' it should be translated," he puts in, lifting his eyes from the page and looking out over his people. Then he goes on, taking this change as a matter of course, "'Thou shalt meet a company of singers coming down from the high place—'"

Whereupon he again interrupts himself, and in an irresistible explanatory aside, which instantly raises the desired picture in the mind of every one, he says: "That means, from the little old church on the hill, you know." And how plain and clear and real and interesting—most of all, interesting—it is from this moment! Another man would have left it that prophets were coming down from a high place, which would not have seemed at all alive or natural, and here, suddenly,

Conwell has flashed his picture of the singers coming down from the little old church on the hill! There is magic in doing that sort of thing.

And he goes on, now reading: "'Thou shalt meet a company of singers coming down from the little old church on the hill, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, and they shall sing.'"

Music is one of Conwell's strongest aids. He sings himself; sings as if he likes to sing, and often finds himself leading the singing—usually so, indeed, at the prayer-meetings, and often, in effect, at the church services.

I remember at one church service that the choir-leader was standing in front of the massed choir ostensibly leading the singing, but that Conwell himself, standing at the rear of the pulpit platform, with his eyes on his hymn-book, silently swaying a little with the music and unconsciously beating time as he swayed, was just as unconsciously the real leader, for it was he whom the congregation were watching and with him that they were keeping time! He never suspected it; he was merely thinking along with the music; and there was such a look of contagious happiness on his face as made every one in the building similarly happy. For he possesses a mysterious faculty of imbuing others with his own happiness.

Not only singers, but the modern equivalent of psaltery and tabret and cymbals, all have their

place in Dr. Conwell's scheme of church service; for there may be a piano, and there may even be a trombone, and there is a great organ to help the voices, and at times there are chiming bells. His musical taste seems to tend toward the thunderous—or perhaps it is only that he knows there are times when people like to hear the thunderous and are moved by it.

And how the choir themselves like it! They occupy a great curving space behind the pulpit, and put their hearts into song. And as the congregation disperse and the choir filter down, sometimes they are still singing and some of them continue to sing as they go slowly out toward the doors. They are happy—Conwell himself is happy—all the congregation are happy. He makes everybody feel happy in coming to church; he makes the church attractive just as Howells was so long ago told that he did in Lexington.

And there is something more than happiness; there is a sense of ease, of comfort, of general joy, that is quite unmistakable. There is nothing of stiffness or constraint. And with it all there is full reverence. It is no wonder that he is accustomed to fill every seat of the great building.

His gestures are usually very simple. Now and then, when he works up to emphasis, he strikes one fist in the palm of the other hand. When he is through you do not remember that he has made any gestures at all, but the sound of his voice remains with you, and the look of his wonderful

eyes. And though he is past the threescore years and ten, he looks out over his people with eyes that still have the veritable look of youth.

Like all great men, he not only does big things, but keeps in touch with myriad details. When his assistant, announcing the funeral of an old member, hesitates about the street and number and says that they can be found in the telephone directory, Dr. Conwell's deep voice breaks quietly in with, "Such a number [giving it], Dauphin Street"—quietly, and in a low tone, yet every one in the church hears distinctly every syllable of that low voice.

His fund of personal anecdote, or personal reminiscence, is constant and illustrative in his preaching, just as it is when he lectures, and the reminiscences sweep through many years, and at times are really startling in the vivid and homelike pictures they present of the famous folk of the past that he knew.

One Sunday evening he made an almost casual reference to the time when he first met Garfield, then a candidate for the Presidency. "I asked Major McKinley, whom I had met in Washington, and whose home was in northern Ohio, as was that of Mr. Garfield, to go with me to Mr. Garfield's home and introduce me. When we got there, a neighbor had to find him. 'Jim! Jim!' he called. You see, Garfield was just plain Jim to his old neighbors. It's hard to recognize a hero over your back fence!" He paused a mo-

ment for the appreciative ripple to subside, and went on:

"We three talked there together"—what a rare talking that must have been—McKinley, Garfield, and Conwell—"we talked together, and after a while we got to the subject of hymns, and those two great men both told me how deeply they loved the old hymn, 'The Old-Time Religion.' Garfield especially loved it, so he told us, because the good old man who brought him up as a boy and to whom he owed such gratitude, used to sing it at the pasture bars outside of the boy's window every morning, and young Jim knew, whenever he heard that old tune, that it meant it was time for him to get up. He said that he had heard the best concerts and the finest operas in the world, but had never heard anything he loved as he still loved 'The Old-Time Religion.' I forget what reason there was for McKinley's especially liking it, but he, as did Garfield, liked it immensely."

What followed was a striking example of Conwell's intentness on losing no chance to fix an impression on his hearers' minds, and at the same time it was a really astonishing proof of his power to move and sway. For a new expression came over his face, and he said, as if the idea had only at that moment occurred to him—as it most probably had—"I think it's in our hymnal!" And in a moment he announced the number, and the great organ struck up, and every person

in the great church—every man, woman, and child —joined in the swinging rhythm of verse after verse, as if they could never tire, of "The Old-Time Religion." It is a simple melody—barely more than a single line of almost monotone music:

It was good enough for mother and it's good enough for me!
It was good in the fiery furnace and it's good enough for me!

Thus it went on, with never-wearying iteration, and each time with the refrain, more and more rhythmic and swaying:

The old-time religion,
The old-time religion,
The old-time religion—
It's good enough for me!

That it was good for the Hebrew children, that it was good for Paul and Silas, that it will help you when you're dying, that it will show the way to heaven—all these and still other lines were sung, with a sort of wailing softness, a curious monotone, a depth of earnestness. And the man who had worked this miracle of control by evoking out of the past his memory of a meeting with two of the vanished great ones of the earth, stood before his people, leading them, singing with them,

his eyes aglow with an inward light. His magic had suddenly set them into the spirit of the old camp-meeting days, the days of pioneering and hardship, when religion meant so much to everybody, and even those who knew nothing of such things felt them, even if but vaguely. Every heart was moved and touched, and that old tune will sing in the memory of all who thus heard it and sung it as long as they live.

Gift for Inspiring Others

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GIFT FOR INSPIRING OTHERS

THE constant earnestness of Conwell, his desire to let no chance slip by of helping a fellow-man, puts often into his voice, when he preaches, a note of eagerness, of anxiety. But when he prays, when he turns to God, his manner undergoes a subtle and unconscious change. A load has slipped off his shoulders and has been assumed by a higher power. Into his bearing, dignified though it was, there comes an unconscious increase of the dignity. Into his voice, firm as it was before, there comes a deeper note of firmness. He is apt to fling his arms widespread as he prays, in a fine gesture that he never uses at other times, and he looks upward with the dignity of a man who, talking to a higher being, is proud of being a friend and confidant. One does not need to be a Christian to appreciate the beauty and fineness of Conwell's prayers.

He is likely at any time to do the unexpected, and he is so great a man and has such control that whatever he does seems to everybody a per-

fectly natural thing. His sincerity is so evident, and whatever he does is done so simply and naturally, that it is just a matter of course.

I remember, during one church service, while the singing was going on, that he suddenly rose from his chair and, kneeling beside it, on the open pulpit, with his back to the congregation, remained in that posture for several minutes. No one thought it strange. I was likely enough the only one who noticed it. His people are used to his sincerities. And this time it was merely that he had a few words to say quietly to God and turned aside for a few moments to say them.

His earnestness of belief in prayer makes him a firm believer in answers to prayer, and, in fact, to what may be termed the direct interposition of Providence. Doubtless the mystic strain inherited from his mother has also much to do with this. He has a typically homely way of expressing it by one of his favorite maxims, one that he loves to repeat encouragingly to friends who are in difficulties themselves or who know of the difficulties that are his; and this heartening maxim is, "Trust in God and do the next thing."

At one time in the early days of his church work in Philadelphia a payment of a thousand dollars was absolutely needed to prevent a lawsuit in regard to a debt for the church organ. In fact, it was worse than a debt; it was a note signed by himself personally, that had become due—he was always ready to assume personal

liability for debts of his church—and failure to meet the note would mean a measure of disgrace as well as marked church discouragement.

He had tried all the sources that seemed open to him, but in vain. He could not openly appeal to the church members, in this case, for it was in the early days of his pastorate, and his zeal for the organ, his desire and determination to have it, as a necessary part of church equipment, had outrun the judgment of some of his best friends, including that of the deacon who had gone to Massachusetts for him. They had urged a delay till other expenses were met, and he had acted against their advice.

He had tried such friends as he could, and he had tried prayer. But there was no sign of aid, whether supernatural or natural.

And then, literally on the very day on which the holder of the note was to begin proceedings against him, a check for precisely the needed one thousand dollars came to him, by mail, from a man in the West—a man who was a total stranger to him. It turned out that the man's sister, who was one of the Temple membership, had written to her brother of Dr. Conwell's work. She knew nothing of any special need for money, knew nothing whatever of any note or of the demand for a thousand dollars; she merely outlined to her brother what Dr. Conwell was accomplishing, and with such enthusiasm that the brother at once sent the opportune check.

At a later time the sum of ten thousand dollars was importunately needed. It was due, payment had been promised. It was for some of the construction work of the Temple University buildings. The last day had come, and Conwell and the very few who knew of the emergency were in the depths of gloom. It was too large a sum to ask the church people to make up, for they were not rich and they had already been giving splendidly, of their slender means, for the church and then for the university. There was no rich man to turn to; the men famous for enormous charitable gifts have never let themselves be interested in any of the work of Russell Conwell. It would be unkind and gratuitous to suggest that it has been because their names could not be personally attached, or because the work is of an unpretentious kind among unpretentious people; it need merely be said that neither they nor their agents have cared to aid, except that one of the very richest, whose name is the most distinguished in the entire world as a giver, did once, in response to a strong personal application, give thirty-five hundred dollars, this being the extent of the association of the wealthy with any of the varied Conwell work.

So when it was absolutely necessary to have ten thousand dollars the possibilities of money had been exhausted, whether from congregation or individuals.

Russell Conwell, in spite of his superb optimism,

is also a man of deep depressions, and this is because of the very fire and fervor of his nature, for always in such a nature there is a balancing. He believes in success; success must come!—success is in itself almost a religion with him—success for himself and for all the world who will try for it! But there are times when he is sad and doubtful over some particular possibility. And he intensely believes in prayer—faith can move mountains; but always he believes that it is better not to wait for the mountains thus to be moved, but to go right out and get to work at moving them. And once in a while there comes a time when the mountain looms too threatening, even after the bravest efforts and the deepest trust. Such a time had come—the ten-thousand-dollar debt was a looming mountain that he had tried in vain to move. He could still pray, and he did, but it was one of the times when he could only think that something had gone wrong.

The dean of the university, who has been closely in touch with all his work for many years, told me of how, in a discouragement which was the more notable through contrast with his usual unfailing courage, he left the executive offices for his home, a couple of blocks away.

"He went away with everything looking dark before him. It was Christmas-time, but the very fact of its being Christmas only added to his depression — Christmas was such an unnatural time for unhappiness! But in a few minutes he

came flying back, radiant, overjoyed, sparkling with happiness, waving a slip of paper in his hand which was a check for precisely ten thousand dollars! For he had just drawn it out of an envelope handed to him, as he reached home, by the mail-carrier.

"And it had come so strangely and so naturally! For the check was from a woman who was profoundly interested in his work, and who had sent the check knowing that in a general way it was needed, but without the least idea that there was any immediate need. That was eight or nine years ago, but although the donor was told at the time that Dr. Conwell and all of us were most grateful for the gift, it was not until very recently that she was told how opportune it was. And the change it made in Dr. Conwell! He is a great man for maxims, and all of us who are associated with him know that one of his favorites is that 'It will all come out right some time!' And of course we had a rare opportunity to tell him that he ought never to be discouraged. And it is so seldom that he is!"

When the big new church was building the members of the church were vaguely disturbed by noticing, when the structure reached the second story, that at that height, on the side toward the vacant and unbought land adjoining, there were several doors built that opened literally into nothing but space!

When asked about these doors and their purpose,

Dr. Conwell would make some casual reply, generally to the effect that they might be excellent as fire-escapes. To no one, for quite a while, did he broach even a hint of the great plan that was seething in his mind, which was that the buildings of a university were some day to stand on that land immediately adjoining the church!

At that time the university, the Temple University as it is now called, was not even a college, although it was probably called a college. Conwell had organized it, and it consisted of a number of classes and teachers, meeting in highly inadequate quarters in two little houses. But the imagination of Conwell early pictured great new buildings with accommodations for thousands! In time the dream was realized, the imagination became a fact, and now those second-floor doors actually open from the Temple Church into the Temple University!

You see, he always thinks big! He dreams big dreams and wins big success. All his life he has talked and preached success, and it is a real and very practical belief with him that it is just as easy to do a large thing as a small one, and, in fact, a little easier! And so he naturally does not see why one should be satisfied with the small things of life. "If your rooms are big the people will come and fill them," he likes to say. The same effort that wins a small success would, rightly directed, have won a great success. "Think big things and then do them!"

Most favorite of all maxims with this man of maxims, is "Let Patience have her perfect work." Over and over he loves to say it, and his friends laugh about his love for it, and he knows that they do and laughs about it himself. "I tire them all," he says, "for they hear me say it every day."

But he says it every day because it means so much to him. It stands, in his mind, as a constant warning against anger or impatience or over-haste —faults to which his impetuous temperament is prone, though few have ever seen him either angry or impatient or hasty, so well does he exercise self-control. Those who have long known him well have said to me that they have never heard him censure any one; that his forbearance and kindness are wonderful.

He is a sensitive man beneath his composure; he has suffered, and keenly, when he has been unjustly attacked; he feels pain of that sort for a long time, too, for even the passing of years does not entirely deaden it.

"When I have been hurt, or when I have talked with annoying cranks, I have tried to let Patience have her perfect work, for those very people, if you have patience with them, may afterward be of help."

And he went on to talk a little of his early years in Philadelphia, and he said, with sadness, that it had pained him to meet with opposition, and that it had even come from ministers of his own denomination, for he had been so misunder-

stood and misjudged; but, he added, the momentary somberness lifting, even his bitter enemies had been won over with patience.

I could understand a good deal of what he meant, for one of the Baptist ministers of Philadelphia had said to me, with some shame, that at first it used actually to be the case that when Dr. Conwell would enter one of the regular ministers' meetings, all would hold aloof, not a single one stepping forward to meet or greet him.

"And it was all through our jealousy of his success," said the minister, vehemently. "He came to this city a stranger, and he won instant popularity, and we couldn't stand it, and so we pounced upon things that he did that were altogether unimportant. The rest of us were so jealous of his winning throngs that we couldn't see the good in him. And it hurt Dr. Conwell so much that for ten years he did not come to our conferences. But all this was changed long ago. Now no minister is so welcomed as he is, and I don't believe that there ever has been a single time since he started coming again that he hasn't been asked to say something to us. We got over our jealousy long ago and we all love him."

Nor is it only that the clergymen of his own denomination admire him, for not long ago, such having been Dr. Conwell's triumph in the city of his adoption, the rector of the most powerful and aristocratic church in Philadelphia voluntarily paid lofty tribute to his aims and ability,

his work and his personal worth. "He is an inspiration to his brothers in the ministry of Jesus Christ," so this Episcopalian rector wrote. "He is a friend to all that is good, a foe to all that is evil, a strength to the weak, a comforter to the sorrowing, a man of God. These words come from the heart of one who loves, honors, and reverences him for his character and his deeds."

Dr. Conwell did some beautiful and unusual things in his church, instituted some beautiful and unusual customs, and one can see how narrow and hasty criticisms charged him, long ago, with sensationalism—charges long since forgotten except through the hurt still felt by Dr. Conwell himself. "They used to charge me with making a circus of the church—as if it were possible for me to make a circus of the church!" And his tone was one of grieved amazement after all these years.

But he was original and he was popular, and therefore there were misunderstanding and jealousy. His Easter services, for example, years ago, became widely talked of and eagerly anticipated because each sermon would be wrought around some fine symbol; and he would hold in his hand, in the pulpit, the blue robin's egg, or the white dove, or the stem of lilies, or whatever he had chosen as the particular symbol for the particular sermon, and that symbol would give him the central thought for his discourse, accented as it would be by the actual symbol itself in view of the congregation. The cross lighted by elec-

tricity, to shine down over the baptismal pool, the little stream of water cascading gently down the steps of the pool during the baptismal rite, the roses floating in the pool and his gift of one of them to each of the baptized as he or she left the water—all such things did seem, long ago, so unconventional. Yet his own people recognized the beauty and poetry of them, and thousands of Bibles in Philadelphia have a baptismal rose from Dr. Conwell pressed within the pages.

His constant individuality of mind, his constant freshness, alertness, brilliancy, warmth, sympathy, endear him to his congregation, and when he returns from an absence they bubble and effervesce over him as if he were some brilliant new preacher just come to them. He is always new to them. Were it not that he possesses some remarkable quality of charm he would long ago have become, so to speak, an old story, but instead of that he is to them an always new story, an always entertaining and delightful story, after all these years.

It is not only that they still throng to hear him either preach or lecture, though that itself would be noticeable, but it is the delightful and delighted spirit with which they do it. Just the other evening I heard him lecture in his own church, just after his return from an absence, and every face beamed happily up at him to welcome him back, and every one listened as intently to his every word as if he had never been heard there before; and when the lecture was over a

huge bouquet of flowers was handed up to him, and some one embarrassedly said a few words about its being because he was home again. It was all as if he had just returned from an absence of months—and he had been away just five and a half days!

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